

Examiner Search Notes
LESS NPL / WORD SEARCH 9-30-2004

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Document ID	Issue Date	Title	Assignee	Inventor	USPC
C C US 20030206720	20031106	60 Video-on-demand purchasing and escrowin...	386/83	705/1	Abecassis, Max
C C US 20030171989	20030511	10 Interactive on line marketing system and meth...	705/14		shorter, Anthony
C C US 20030054888	20030320	35 Method and system to incorporate game play int...	463/42	463/16	Walker, Jay S. et al.
C C US 20030033199	20030213	26 Method and system for delivery of targeted comm...	705/14	725/32	Coleman, Thomas E.
C C US 20030147638	200301010	37 Business method for e-commerce through custom...	705/14		Banerjee, Dipak N. et al.
C C US 20020035516	20020321	14 Server computer system for selling digital conte...	705/26	700/17, 700/231,	Arima, Keiko
C C US 20020026354	20020228	26 METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR TARGETED COMM...	705/14		COLEMAN, THOMAS E.
C C US 20010042002	20011115	44 METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR COMMUNICATING TARGETED IN...	705/10	705/14, 705/27	KOOPERSMITH, JEFF
C C US 20010041053	20011115	60 ADVERTISING SYSTEM	386/83	386/92	MATLIS, Michael B. et al.
C C US 20010124631	20011025	3 Advertising and using networks for advertising on...	705/14		ABECASSIS, MAX
C C US 20010019667	20010830	33 System for advertising on network for advertising...			Kim, Yang shin

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 - 21) ((pay or credit or compensate or compensation or payment crediting or controlled or restricted)
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TYPE	DOCUMENT ID	ISSUE DATE	PATENT NUMBER	INVENTOR	SEARCH	EXAMINER	STATUS	FILED	RECEIVED
C	US 20030054988	20030320	35	Method and system to incorporate game play int method and system for delivery of targeted comm	463/42	463/16	Walker, Jay S. et al.	R	R R R R R
C	US 200300313199	20030213	26	METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR DELIVERY OF TARGETED COMM	705/14	725/32	Coleman, Thomas E.	R	R R R R R
R	US 20020026351	20020228	26	METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR DELIVERY OF TARGETED COMM	705/14		COLEMAN, THOMAS E.	R	R R R R R
C	US 20010042002	20011115	44	METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR COMMUNICATING TARGETED IN	705/10	705/14;	KOOPERSMITH, JEFF	R	R R R R R
S	US 2001004651	20011025	8	Earning and using benefits for responses to intelligent agents for electronic commerce	705/14		Marks, Michael B. et al.	R	R R R R R
C	US 6119101 A	20000912	74	Attention brokerage	705/26	705/10;	Peckover, Douglas L.	R	R R R R R
C	US 5855008 A	19981229	27		705/14	705/10;	Goldhaber, A. Nathaniel et al.	R	R R R R R
S	US 5794210 A	19980811	33	Attention brokerage	705/14	705/10;	Goldhaber, A. Nathaniel et al.	R	R R R R R

SEARCH	EXAMINER	STATUS	FILED	RECEIVED

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④ Drafts				
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(19) United States

(12) Patent Application Publication
Marks et al.(10) Pub. No.: US 2001/0034651 A1
(43) Pub. Date: Oct. 25, 2001(54) EARNING AND USING BENEFITS FOR
RESPONSES TO INTERNET ADVERTISING
AT A MERCHANT LOCATION(76) Inventors: Michael B. Marks, South Orleans, MA
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(21) Appl. No.: 09/789,845

(22) Filed: Feb. 22, 2001

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Non-provisional of provisional application No.
60/185,196, filed on Feb. 25, 2000.

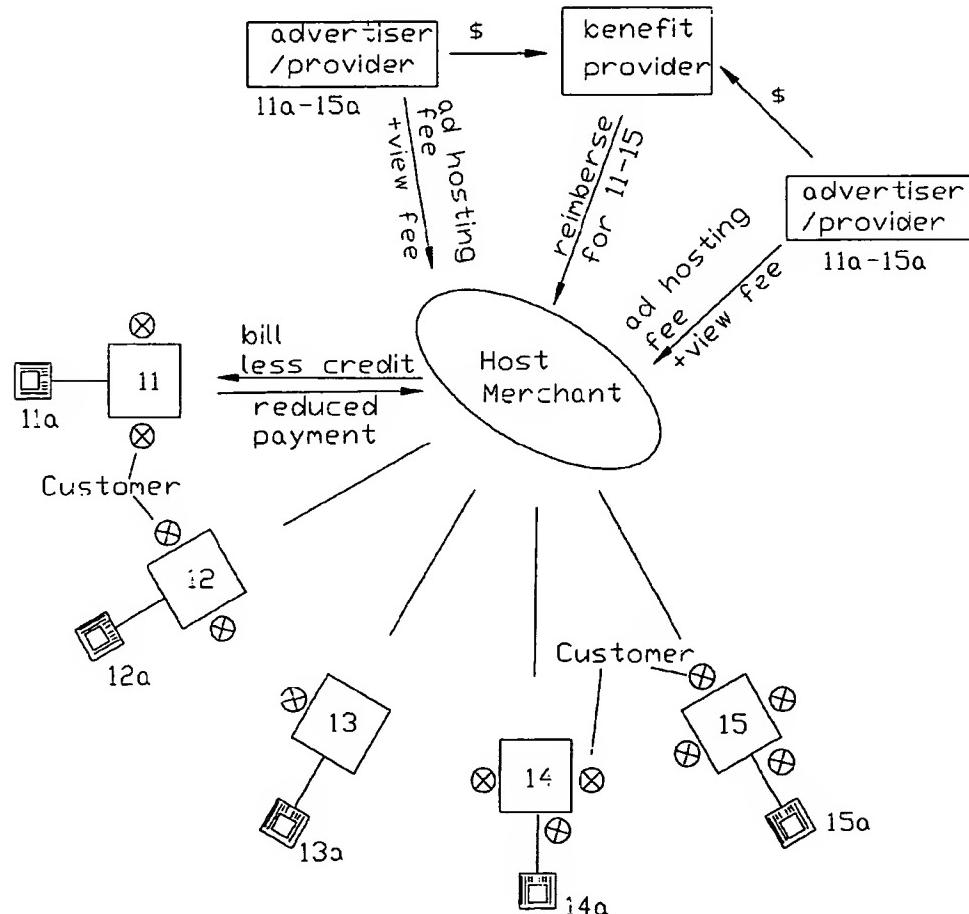
Publication Classification

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(52) U.S. Cl. 705/14

(57) ABSTRACT

An incentive benefit program compensates customers for viewing advertising and other activities while conducting business at a host merchant. The compensation is in the form of an immediate discount toward goods and/or services at the host merchant. The discount may be a reduction in the customer's bill, or additional product from the merchant. For example a customer may respond to ads on a display terminal of a gasoline pump while dispensing gas. The customer can then immediately receive additional gas or a reduced cost for the gas dispensed. A user releases no inherently valuable information, such as an email or home address or credit card number, to any entities to receive benefits. The user remains anonymous to the benefit provider and others. According to the invention a customer easily obtains benefits anonymously while the host merchant earns loyalty from such minimally identified customers.



DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 20010034651 A1

TITLE: Earning and using benefits
for responses to internet
advertising at a merchant
location

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Abstract Paragraph - ABTX (1):

An incentive benefit program compensates
customers for viewing advertising
and other activities while conducting business at a
host merchant. The
compensation is in the form of an immediate
discount toward goods and/or
services at the host merchant. The discount may be
a reduction in the
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releases no inherently valuable
information, such as an email or home address or
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anonymous to the benefit
provider and others. According to the invention a
customer easily obtains
benefits anonymously while the host merchant earns
loyalty from such minimally
identified customers.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (9) :

[0007] Consumers in both physical and Internet based merchant locations generally place a premium on disclosing personal information. The Internet makes it possible to track consumer activities by means of cookies. Cookies therefore present a potential threat to privacy and impose a transaction cost. To minimize this cost it is therefore desirable to limit the lifespan of a cookie identifier. U.S. Pat. No. 6,134,592 by Montulli discloses one method of creating a cookie with a limited life span.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (10) :

[0008] Incentives such as frequent flier miles require the accumulation of benefit units to a given threshold before a benefit can be claimed. The units of value are stored in a consumer's account and may be accumulated in conjunction with various on-line and off-line activities. Rarely does a single activity produce enough benefit units to achieve a threshold. Thus a consumer must engage in multiple activities within connected incentive programs to achieve an award that can be claimed.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (13) :

[0011] If a benefit can be obtained from a program without a consumer being identified, or without the advertiser knowing information of likely monetary value about the consumer, the benefit will be more desirable and accorded higher value by the consumer. A benefit will be especially valuable if it is

both anonymous and immediate. At the same time, an advertisement is most valuable to an advertiser and most beneficial to an audience when it can be targeted specifically to an audience with known characteristics.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (17) :

[0014] A further advantage to immediate usability of a benefit is that less identification of a consumer is required. The activity is occurring at a physical location or in conjunction with a specific web site. While the consumer's whereabouts are known at that time, it is not necessary to know how to contact the consumer when he has gone somewhere else.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (18) :

[0015] If a consumer is a customer at a known physical location and is paying by cash, he can be entirely anonymous, both in payment and in receipt of a benefit. If he is at a web site to make a purchase, he will not be anonymous to the web site since a credit card number or similar is required to make the purchase. But he will not need to provide any identification or contact information to an advertiser or incentive program provider that displays at the web site.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (20) :

[0017] A business or web site that provides space or time for advertising is a "host location" or "host." A consumer or customer

is credited with a benefit if he acts upon an ad at the host location. In acting upon an ad the consumer performs an action to verify that he has seen (or heard), or had time to see (or hear), an ad. This is considered an ad "response" or "view." In the preferred embodiment the consumer must make a purchase from the host location to actually receive the benefit. The host whom the consumer is currently visiting pays the benefit by way of a discount, premium or upgrade to the consumer. The incentive program provider and/or the advertiser or advertisement provider then reimburses the host. Alternatively, the host may act as the incentive program provider and supply benefits without reimbursement.

Summary of Invention Paragraph - BSTX (21) :

[0018] Under one embodiment of the present invention the benefits may be used immediately. In another embodiment, the benefits are accumulated, stored and controlled by the host on behalf of a consumer and may be used at a later time. In either embodiment, the consumer retains his anonymity with respect to the benefit provider except in the unique instance where the host acts as the benefit provider.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (3) :

[0028] Ads participating in the incentive program may be supplied by an advertiser, an advertising agency, a media buying agency or an advertisement

consolidator, each of the foregoing comprising an example of an "advertisement provider" or "advertisement supplier". The advertisement provider may also act as the incentive program provider. Participating ads may include a digital identifier that may signify participation in the program to the host computer and may further signify a specified level of benefit. The identifier could be comprised of an icon appearing on the ad.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (4) :

[0029] If a consumer responds to an advertisement at a given terminal, the terminal may notify a computer at the host. Responding to an ad may mean clicking on a banner or page to see more detailed information from the advertiser. The host may know that an advertisement is participating in the benefit program by recognizing a digital identifier that is sent to the host when a consumer responds to an ad at the given terminal; alternatively the host may recognize that an ad is participating in the benefit program when it delivers the ad to the prospective consumer's terminal. Recognizing the digital identifier, the host may know the specified benefit (discount or premium) to be awarded to the given terminal. Further, the host may track the specific ads for which benefits are being paid such that the host may, 1) directly bill the incentive program provider or the advertisers whose ads have paid out benefits in conjunction with the program and 2) automatically receive payment for delivery of the benefit. The incentive

program of the present invention is response based and may work in parallel with other advertising programs that may be billed on different bases such as page views or pay for responses.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (6) :

[0031] When an ad is delivered to a given terminal or when a consumer at a given terminal responds to an ad, a digital identifier for the specific ad is recorded at the host terminal. When benefits are delivered in conjunction with a given ad, a record correlating the delivery of the benefit to the ad may be made at one or more of the following locations: the host computer, the incentive provider computer or the advertisement provider computer. The record may then be used to effect billing of the incentive provider by the host for the benefit that has been provided. The incentive provider may subsequently charge the advertisement provider for the benefit that was paid. Concurrently the record may also effect billing of the advertisement provider by the host for delivery of the ad itself.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (8) :

[0033] The incentive program provider does not need to accumulate or store credits for the host or consumer. The incentive program provider does not need to administrate the awarding of benefits. This simplifies administration of the program since no user identification number or tracking procedure is

required. On an immediate or periodic basis the host may request reimbursement from the incentive program provider. The incentive program provider may have previously given the host a credit card number to effect automatic payment to the host when a benefit is paid in conjunction with a response to an ad participating in the incentive program. Concurrently or periodically the incentive program provider may invoice the advertisement provider for benefits that have been delivered in conjunction with delivery or response to a qualifying ad.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (9) :

[0034] The benefit provider need not know any information about recipients of the credits. As seen in FIG. 1 the credit and payment transaction for responding to ads is handled between only the host merchant and his customer. Therefore the customer need not reveal himself to any entities, beyond the merchant with whom he is doing business, to gain use of the benefit program of the present invention. Use of the program may be spontaneous with no recording or registration process needed of any kind. The customer is identified only as an anonymous person who happens to be at a known location at a point in time. Even if the payment to the merchant is by credit card there need not be any record of the benefit transaction other than possibly a non specific "credit" entry on the user's receipt.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (10) :

[0035] In FIG. 1 advertisements 11a-15a may all be the same or may be different; advertisements 11a-15a may also comprise multiple advertisements for different goods and services appearing at the same time on the same page (or screen); advertisements 11a-15a may also be audio or video advertisements.

They need not be for or by the host merchant. Multiple credits may be accumulated during one visit to a merchant, up to a possible limit. Methods of verifying and valuing ad viewing activities are described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/774559, "Providing Benefits by the Internet to Minimally Identified Users" filed Feb. 1, 2001. This patent application is incorporated herein in its entirety by this reference. These same methods may be used here, except that it is not required to associate with or identify any other existing benefit program. In this reference, an ad has a portion of its space dedicated to an icon symbolizing participation in the benefit program.

When the present invention is used with audio content the icon may comprise an audible tone or series of tones. For the present invention a merchant or advertiser may request that some or all ads provide a benefit regardless of how they are viewed; no icons may be displayed since all ads appearing at a given host's location may be part of the incentive program. A merchant may tell his customers that viewing an ad at his place of business will provide a discount if a purchase is made.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (15):

[0040] In a gas station a dispensing pump includes the terminal for displaying and viewing ads. In FIG. 1 there are pumps 11 to 15. FIG. 13 is most accurate for this application in that there normally can be only one user per pump station at a given time. The terminal from which a credit was earned may be identified using standard billing and crediting procedures typical of gas stations. If the customer has responded to participating ads at the pump terminal he may be paid by an increased amount of change, a reduction in the charge to a credit card or ATM card, an increased quantity of gas beyond the amount paid or other form of premium such as a travel mug. The increased change or gas amount would be especially for cash payments. An increased quantity of gas is in a category of premium rather than discount.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (16):

[0041] In a restaurant there are tables 11 to 15 in FIG. 1, each with one or more guests. Internet ads 11a-15a are displayed at a terminal at each table. The terminal is linked to a host computer that in turn is linked to a computer that tabulates the restaurant's guest checks (one physical computer may comprise multiple independent computers). These links may be direct or by way of the Internet. When a guest at a terminal responds to a given ad the response is recorded at the host computer (or at the incentive program

provider's computer) and correlated to the given ad. The benefit provided by the given ad or multiple ads may be a discount on the check amount or a free menu item. When the final check is tabulated for payment, the benefit may be calculated as part of the check to include the discount for any participating ads that received responses. Alternatively, a benefit, perhaps in the form of a free drink, may be delivered prior to the tabulation of the final check. The host computer may then invoice the incentive provider's account (and possibly the advertisement provider's account) for delivery of the benefit (and the ad). In a restaurant using computerized guest checks the crediting process could be at least partly automatic. Other examples of suitable merchants for the incentive program of the invention are a bowling alley or a supermarket cashier station. Any physical business where a customer is associated with an identifiable part of a merchant's facility for an extended period may effectively use the incentive program of the invention.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (17):

[0042] A further example is in an airliner on which a passenger's personal video screen acts as a customer terminal to show ad banners. A passenger's viewing terminal or screen location may be known in conjunction with a specified seat location on an aircraft. Viewing participating ads may enable discounts or upgrades on drinks, headphones, or free premium items, such as

better peanuts. The passenger may receive benefits without providing (actively or passively) personal profile information to a database where it may be stored and correlated to other information. The viewing screen at the passenger's location may be linked to the Internet or to an onboard computer as part of an intranet whereby catalog items may be offered for sale; in this instance, the present invention may be used to provide discounts on catalog items if a passenger chooses to make a purchase. When a passenger responds to a participating ad a host computer on the airliner registers the response and signals that a benefit is due to be delivered to the passenger sitting in the seat correlated to the terminal on which the ad response was given. Depending on the nature of the benefit a premium item may be physically delivered to the passenger, a discount may be effected on a current transaction, or frequent flier miles may be entered into the passenger's frequent flier account.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (22) :

[0047] Wireless devices used in conjunction with the present invention may comprise the user terminal and receive, store and display information about the benefit as a bar code on a viewing screen or a print out that could be scanned by a participating merchant to effect enjoyment of the benefit at a time discontinuous from the delivery of the benefit information. In this embodiment the bar code may comprise the digital identification that tracks the

advertising and activates the payment mechanisms. In effect, the bar code may act as a digital coupon.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (24) :

[0049] The benefit program of the present invention may be also used for Internet merchants. If a customer logs on to a merchant's web site, he will be identifiable to the merchant. If the customer is an unknown visitor he could have an identifier or cookie sent to his web browser when he visits the merchant. The customer may ultimately be identified to the merchant if he makes a purchase. However, using the present invention, the benefit provider and advertiser do not need to know anything about the customer. Any participating ads that are viewed while at the merchant's site may be credited toward purchases from the host merchant. The credits may be stored in a customer's account at the web site or, alternatively may be stored in a cookie placed in the customer's browser by the merchant. If a potential customer leaves the merchant's site without buying anything to which credits may be applied, the credits may expire after a set time. Alternatively, the credits may accumulate at that merchant. However to ~~conci~~ achieve minimal identification of a customer, the credits and the cookie identity may expire when a user has left the site or shortly thereafter. A further benefit of short-term expiry is to encourage the user to stay or to quickly return to the host merchant's site and actually make a discounted purchase. As discussed

above the ads that are viewed to earn credits at the host merchant need not be related to the host's business.

Detail Description Paragraph - DETX (27) :

[0052] In the case of an on-line merchant the identification of the customer for giving the credit should be designed so that the benefit provider remains blind to the customer's identity. This is in accordance with a feature of the present invention wherein the user incurs no cost of being further identified when using the benefit program. A possible design is for the computer supporting the host merchant's web site to be able to identify ads on the site that are participating in the benefit program. The presence of an identifier in the form of an active response area signified by an icon as described above is one way to know an ad is in the program. A response to an ad in conjunction with the icon tells the merchant's computer to credit the customer's account if a purchase is made. The customer's account is known to the host web site by means of a cookie that has been previously installed in the customer's browser or by means of a log-in process whereby the customer has identified himself. The host merchant may then request reimbursement from the benefit provider; the reimbursement request may include identification of the ad that caused the crediting; this information may be used so that the benefit provider may accurately bill the advertiser. If an ad receives a response without a

relationship to the icon or the benefit program, the crediting and debiting may be done in a different way, wherein the advertisement provider debits the advertiser and credits the merchant.

Claims Text - CLTX (9) :

9. The benefit program of claim 8 wherein the host merchant operates by means of a web site and the selected activity includes responding to at least one of: advertisements displayed on pages of the web site, and emails sent to the customer on behalf of the host merchant.